

that the woodswallows were flying fairly fast and that the swifts were cruising at a relatively leisurely speed. This is my only record of the Fork-tailed Swift at Caron.

The morning was clear, hot and fine, with little wind. Later the wind strengthened from the east.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Caron.

**The Smallest Western Australian Bird.**—I have occasionally been asked the question—"Which do you consider the smallest Western Australian bird?" We have several genera of small birds and which contains actually the smallest species is not an easy matter to determine at first glance. Some birds flit about with long tails and have the habit of fluffing out their body feathers, thus exaggerating their real size. Such a species is the common Grey Fantail *Rhipidura flabellifera*). On the other hand we have forms such as the Thornbills (*Acanthiza*), Pardalotes, Wren-warblers (*Malurus*), Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*), Mistletoe-bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) and the Emu-wrens (*Stipiturus*).

I have prepared many skins of birds for scientific examination. When skinned the bodies of all the above-mentioned birds are very small indeed, especially in the case of the last three and only very sensitive scales would indicate the difference. The Emu-wren has a long tail and puffs out its body feathers somewhat. The other two are compact little birds with tails on the short side in comparison, especially so in the case of the Weebill. This little bird is well known though I have nowhere found it common. It has a loud musical voice and favours those curious lengthy but narrow groves of saplings found in the drier parts of the State. It builds a small but very neat domed nest of spiders' webs, cocoons and lichens. The nest always reminds me of that of the Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*) of Western Europe. It lays three white eggs speckled with light brown and the small nest has to accommodate the brooding female and well-grown young at the conclusion of the nesting period.

The Mistletoe-bird is not so well known in the South-west as the thornbills and pardalotes. It is a quiet retiring species haunting the tops of trees but is best studied, perhaps, in districts where mulga and other large tree-like bushes predominate. The nest is wonderfully constructed of spider webs, cocoons and animal hair. It is dome-shaped but hung from some slender twig. I brought one home from central Australia. Weighed with the accompanying twig to which it was attached it sealed seven grains on a chemist's balance. In this fragile house the female has to brood over three developed young birds. These facts will give an idea of the smallness of everything involved.

The tiny Emu-wrens of the South-west haunt the coastal sandhills and blackboy flats. Their nests are built in low scrub, well hidden but with a favourable look-out. The female lays three large eggs considering her size. I think on the whole, if we ignore its long tail, this is the smallest Western Australian bird—feathers have no appreciable weight in the case of emu-wrens.

—F. LAWSON WHITLOCK, Bunbury.